

## **Cambria Forest Committee March 14, 2025 monthly meeting summary**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Crosby Swartz at 10:06AM. Also in attendance were Treasurer Laura Swartz, Board member Julie Jorgensen, Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (FFRP) Executive Director Kitty Connolly, Greenspace Executive Director Karin Argano, North Coast Advisor Council (NCAC) Chair Christina Galloway, Christine Heinrichs, and Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) Board member and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.

Crosby calls to our attention an article in the on line information newsletter CambriaCA written by Christine Heinrichs regarding the invasive plants Pride of Madera and pampas grass becoming more prevalent in our community. Christine and Crosby pointed out areas in town where invasive plants are most prevalent. She also highlighted the revised version of the Invasive Weed Guide put together by Crosby and Laura Swartz, Michael Thomas and herself. Laura asks about the Weed Guide perhaps being made available for sale at the FFRP store on Main St, to which Kitty replies, “you’ve got the okay.”. There was also a comment on the newly formed Divestiture of Lots Ad Hoc Committee to which Laura has offered her assistance. Crosby stated this topic would be of importance to the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, especially the value of retaining some of these vacant parcels. A variety of various items were also briefly discussed.

Laura then provided her Treasurer’s Report, beginning with CFC initially having \$2943.72 in the bank, but having paid ASAP Reprographics \$1498 for printing of the Weed Guide, plus \$210 for the annual fee of Post Office Box. With a thoughtful donor contribution of \$75, CFC currently has \$1310.72 remaining in the account. Laura also mentioned that the \$500 grant from the Cambria Community Council went toward the printing of the Weed Guide, as well as various brochures available at the kiosk at the Cambria Historical Museum grounds..

Regarding Organization Reports, FFRP Executive Director Connolly gave a brief update, beginning with Brian Morgan, who has been in charge of trails maintenance for many years, has decided to resign from his post. He will certainly be missed, though will still be involved with docent tours on the Ranch. With both him and his truck used for tool hauling no longer available, FFRP will be purchasing a used but well maintained 1996 Ford F-150 4 wheel drive truck for \$2,000 pending inspection by Gerber’s Automotive. Also, on the horizon is the Annual Wildflower Show the weekend of April 26-27 at the Cambria Veterans Hall, always a much appreciated, soul nourishing event enjoyed by folks of all ages and backgrounds..

Karin Argano, Executive Director of Greenspace, informed us that, with much needed rain happening today, pile burning is taking place at Rancho Marino, the main reason neither Spencer Gordon or Keith Seydel are attending today’s CFC meeting. A memorial service for much loved, multi talented Art Van Rhyn will be taking place tomorrow, March 15th, at the Greenspace Creekside Reserve from 11AM-1PM. All are welcome to celebrate the life of this very special and unique Cambria treasure who, in the words of Karin, “was truly one of the founders of Greenspace”. On Saturday, March 29th, there will be a Garden Tour at the home of Carol Rice on Hillcrest Drive, with the opportunity to learn more about Greenspace, perhaps attracting new member as well. Greenspace will also be celebrating Earth Day at the Reserve on Sunday, April 27th. All of the vendors from last year’s very successful event will be returning, The Forest Committee will have a table to provide information on our wonderful natural environment and what the Committee contributes to our community, plus there will again be ongoing classes for young folks at the Learning Center and activity in the Movement area. Seedling trays for tree planting of Monterey Pine will also be available. Speaking of annual events, the once a year Adventure Auction fundraiser will be taking place Saturday, May 31st, from 5-9 PM at the Jocelyn Center, with dinner catered by Robin’s Restaurant. Finally, the monthly Greenspace Speaker Series continues on various Sunday afternoon’s at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Arlington Way. The speakers and topics are available at the Greenspace web site: [greenspacecambria.org](https://greenspacecambria.org)

Long awaited trail improvements will soon be addressed in Strawberry Canyon, along with hoped for fuel

reduction efforts being permitted by the California Coastal Commission taking place in August, plus goat and sheep grazing in the Fall. Six interpretive signs will soon be installed throughout the Center Street Reserve in May and June providing an abundance of information, as well as one being placed in Strawberry Canyon. Karin ended her report by congratulating Kitty Connolly on the very attractive new signs being placed at entrance areas to the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, stating, “they’re gorgeous”... “they’re beautiful”.

Under New Business, there was brief discussion regarding the detailed article on Logging in USA Today that presented the two sides to the argument as to tree removal in the nation’s forested areas.

Unfinished Business began with a Discussion of the Weed Abatement Ordinance approved by the Board of Directors at yesterday’s CCSD Meeting. Crosby feels the stated guidelines are vague, with the hope they will be updated at the next monthly meeting of the Fire Prevention Committee on Thursday, April 17th at 10:30 AM at the Veterans Hall. The hiring of Paradise Tree Service last year to deal with fuel reduction on privately owned lots that were not cleared in the required time period created much controversy. A discussion on the Fire Hazard Fuel Reduction timetable took place. Overall this discussion touched upon varied areas of importance on these topics. Karin commented on conversations she’s had with Cambria Fire Chief Michael Burkey, and that he’s trying to find a balance between the needs of the community and the health of the forest. Christina Galloway said she doesn’t see the Fuel Reduction guidelines as a game changer, plus expressed her displeasure with property owners who don’t clear their lots in a timely manner, that the public should be engaged and educated, neighbors should be working together to address this important issue, and that we should “love the forest”.

Crosby commented on home hardening and ember proofing homes as a most effective way of addressing fire protection, and how difficult it is to obtain home owners insurance without taking protective measures. Julie also mentioned that healthy oak trees are more flame resistant than Monterey Pine, and if one fireproofs their roof they can get a discount on home owners insurance. Crosby continued the discussion, talking about drone photos being taken by companies hired by insurance agencies that can be misleading and therefore problematic in the cost of, or even having one’s home owners insurance renewed.

With the discussion winding down, Crosby adjourned the meeting at 11:21.

The next Cambria Forest Committee monthly meeting will take place on Friday, April 11, 2025 at 10AM via Zoom.

This meeting summary written and submitted by CCSD Director and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.